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REPLY

TO THE

ANSWER TO A SHORT ESSAY,

&c. &c.

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A

REPLY

TO THE

ANSWER

TO A

SHORT ESSAY on the Modes of Defence beſt adapted to the Situation and Circumſtances of this Iſland, &c.

IN A LETTER

TO HIS GRACE

The Duke of RICHMOND.

Tu t' avançais ſur ces remparts ſanglants
Fier Richemont, digne eſpoir d'Orleans,
Et cinq Bourgeois, gens de cœur & d'elite
En chancelant marchent ſous ta conduite.

VOLTAIRE.

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MDCCLXXXV.

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MAY

MY LORD DUKE,

A Fortnight's hard labour and application (for I never queſtioned your Grace's perſeverance and induſtry) have at laſt produced an Anſwer to a "Short Eſſay on the Modes of Defence beſt adapted to the Situation and Circumſtances of this Iſland." You write, my Lord (and it is, to be ſure, a mark of your ſenſibility), like a perſon who is ſore, circumſcribed, and embarraſſed, anxious about the ſupport of ſchemes that you cannot defend by fair argument, and the removing of thoſe impreſſions, which the candid repreſentation of truth never fails to make on an impartial Public, that muſt now decide on the merits of the conteſt between you and the Author of the Eſſay. A moderate ſhare of temper and reflection would have pointed

out to you the glaring inconſiſtency of charging him with miſrepreſentation, whilſt at the ſame time you allow to his obſervations the force of demonſtration. Theſe are contradictions, which even your Grace's ingenuity can hardly reconcile: for demonſtration can ſcarce exiſt without truth. You have charged him, not only with miſrepreſentation, but illiberality. He is not conſcious, however, of having advanced any thing reſpecting you, that is not ſtrictly and abſolutely true; and what is ſo, cannot well be called illiberal. In accounting for your conduct, in ſome meaſure, from your temper and diſpoſition, he only argues philoſophically, and on the principles of human nature; for every perſon is influenced to a certain degree, both in his ſchemes and opinions, by his paſſions, apprehenſions, and propenſities.

Now do you really think, my Lord, that to criticiſe your plans with that freedom, which every Engliſhman is intitled to, can be conſtrued into an attempt to impoſe on the Public, ideas of the moſt dangerous tendency?

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tendency? Is the exiſtence of the State inſeparably connected with the execution of your projects? Is the expoſure of their impropriety to be deemed the criterion or ſtandard of miſrepreſentation? Inſtead of anſwering the principal and material parts of the Short Eſſay, you have, with a degree of candour peculiar to yourſelf, ſelected detached ſentences and collateral obſervations.

The moſt eſſential objection to the erection of your propoſed lines of Defence, viz. the dreadful conſequences that muſt neceſſarily reſult to this country from an enemy's getting poſſeſſion of them, is an object of infinitely greater importance than even the expence. This, however, you have but barely touched upon, and have avoided entering into any argumentation on the attack and defence of them, under the ſpecious pretext of its being unbecoming a good ſubject to do ſo. Mankind will view this as an evaſion or ſubterfuge, to avoid encountering facts and reaſoning,

which it is impoſſible for you to obviate or remove.

You allow the Author of the Eſſay to be perfectly right in aſſerting, that few countries are better adapted than England to a defenſive war. But does it therefore follow, as you wiſh to inſinuate, that it is not within the limits of poſſibility for an enemy to come, with the ſerious intention and ſettled expectation of conquering the country? Although you ſay the inference is natural, nobody, I believe, but a perſon of your Grace's very ſuperior diſcernment could have drawn it. He neither thought of drawing ſuch a concluſion, nor advanced any thing that can directly lead to it. For it ſurely cannot be reckoned abſolutely impoſſible for an event ſimilar to that which has already happened by miſtakes on the part of the defendants, and other co-operating incidents, to take place hereafter. He only endeavours to eſtabliſh this point, that it is impracticable for any Power in Europe to conquer this iſland, if we act on

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the true principles of a defenſive war, provided that we are, at the ſame time, neither diſtracted by internal diſſentions, nor labour under the embarraſſment and inconvenience of having ſuch extenſive lines of works as you have projected; which, unleſs manned by a very numerous body of troops, will undoubtedly fall into the enemy's hands, and furniſh him with the means of neſtling and ſecurely fixing himſelf immediately; and of watching every favourable opportunity of attacking us in our weakeſt moments. But if you are really convinced that he has proved the impoſſibility of ſuch a meaſure, you muſt certainly be candid enough to allow, that he has done ſome good, in demonſtrating the idea of a ſerious invaſion to be chimerical; and in quieting thoſe apprehenſions, which it is doubtleſs fully as natural for your Grace to entertain, as your neighbours.

The next obſervation you make, ſhows that you poſſeſs the power of diſcrimination in a wonderful degree. "The conſervation of our dock-yards," you aſſert to be an ob-

ject

ject of little importance to the Author of the Short Eſſay, in conſequence of his having obſerved, that "the preſervation of dock-yards, fortifications, &c. muſt, in caſes of extremity, yield to public neceſſity." Who, but a perſon that can diſcriminate ſo nicely could have diſcovered that there is no intermediate degrees of importance between an object of little moment and the actual ſafety of the State in times of extreme danger? His Grace of Richmond is a man of too towering a genius to move in moderation. He muſt fly from one extreme to the other. The diſtinction between a dependent State and a troubleſome Province he can beſt explain.

He likewiſe agrees with the Author in this, "that the coaſt of Great Britain is too extenſive to be fortified againſt a landing or invaſion;" and from this ageeement concludes, that the expenſive works "began (as he grammatically expreſſes it) on the Heights of Dover, the Flats of Graveſend, or the extenſive projects for Sheerneſs, Landguard Fort, and North Yarmouth

mouth Coaſt, which were all begun during the laſt war, and which have coſt this nation upwards of 200,000 *l.*" cannot afford the ſmalleſt ſecurity to our principal dock-yards, *viz.* Portſmouth and Plymouth. None but your Grace could have made ſuch a diſcovery. But what will the execution of your own projects amount to, if theſe, which, comparatively in point of extent, are literally nothing, have coſt 200,000 *l.* and are not a quarter finiſhed? Were it not painful to me to give a flat contradiction to a perſon of your rank and condition, I would tell you, that Landguard Fort and the works at Sheerneſs are more than three quarters finiſhed.

But, did not your Grace ſeriouſly think of a much more extenſive project for Sheerneſs than that which has been executed? and did not Captain Pitts actually, by your deſire, make out a plan on your enlarged ſcheme, and deliver it in to the late Maſter General, which he very judiciouſly rejected?

You

You likewiſe agree with the Author in this, " that it is impolitic to convert either our whole active ſtrength, or a diſproportionate part of it, into a ſtationary one." But you ſay, " It is begging the queſtion, to aſſume that the works propoſed by you will confine in fortreſſes the whole, or even any diſproportional part of the moveable ſtrength of the country." This, Sir, cannot well be conſidered as begging the queſtion, ſince it is generally underſtood, that the military eſtabliſhment of Great Britain can hardly ſpare, from other neceſſary and indiſpenſible ſervices, a ſufficiency of troops for manning properly the works that we already have. It might, however, be proper in your Grace, to make it perfectly clear to Parliament, that your almoſt infinitely more extenſive projects are not at all diſproportionate to this eſtabliſhment, before you aſk money for executing them. This is a matter, however, that can beſt be determined by general officers accuſtomed to the conduct and management of troops, and able to

judge of what they will or will not do in danger. After mature conſideration they will be capable of aſcertaining the number of men requiſite for defending lines of diſtant and detached works, which, taken together, are at leaſt ſeventeen miles in extent.

You likewiſe aſſert, "That he takes it for an agreed point, that the military eſtabliſhment of the State muſt continue invariable." I am extremely ſorry to be under the neceſſity of uſing your own polite language, and telling you, that the aſſertion is abſolutely falſe. I am ſurpriſed your Grace is not aſhamed of making ſuch an inaccurate quotation. It ſufficiently proves, that your accuracy is not inferior to your diſcernment. The Author has nowhere ſaid, that the military eſtabliſhment, either of this or any other State, muſt continue invariable. But ſpeaking of States in general, he makes uſe of the following words: "It is evident that, whilſt the military eſtabliſhment of a State continues invariable, in whatever proportion the one

(that is, its fixed or ſtationary force) is encreaſed, in the ſame exactly muſt the other (its acting force) be diminiſhed." The inferences you draw from ſuch a falſe quotation, are conſequently inconcluſive. The mention you make of the militia, proves a dereliction of your former principles; for you uſed formerly to oppoſe this eſtabliſhment with unbecoming violence, and prevented it from taking place in Suſſex, as long as you poſſibly could. But you now aſſume an unuſual ſtrain of panegyric, as this meritorious and conſtitutional body of men may poſſibly have the honour of being converted into ſtationary and inactive garriſons, to defend your Grace's fortifications.

Mr. Addiſon makes fine writing to conſiſt in thoughts that are true, but not obvious; if this definition is juſt, your Grace's anſwer may be eſteemed fine writing. As you have the peculiar merit of diſcovering, with infinite ſagacity, a new mode of increaſing our navy, by erecting military works and fortifications. You have

have united both branches of the ſervice, and formed a conjunction between a ſhip of the line and a redoubt, which is at once new and ſingular. But let us examine your Grace's logic, and we ſhall ſtill find new matter for ſurpriſe and and admiration: you firſt beg the queſtion, by aſſerting, "That if your plan of fortifications is carried into execution, our dock-yards will be perfectly ſecure. This, however happens to be preciſely the point in diſpute between your Grace and the Author of the Eſſay. But you then proceed, "It is preſumed, that not leſs than ten ſail of the line could be allotted for the defence of the Channel, if the dock-yards are left liable to inſult; but if they are rendered ſecure by fortifications, an addition of thoſe ten ſail is thereby given to our naval force; and ſuppoſing them to be, on an average, 74 gun ſhips, their value, at the ordinary calculation of 1000*l.* per gun, will be 740,000*l.* which is more than theſe fortifications will coſt. But a much more important conſideration than the money is, that we thereby

get an additional force, which we could not poſſibly acquire by any other means." The perplexity of your Grace's reaſoning, can only be conveyed in your own words; yet your ingenuity is apparent, when you attempt to ſay, that "Fortifications actually give us the uſe of ſo many more ſhips (ten of the line) for active ſervice, as muſt, without theſe works, be kept at home ſtationary for the protection of our naval arſenals." Here it is preſumed, your Grace allows, at leaſt, the exiſtence, and conſequently the expence of building theſe ten ſhips; yet immediately after, you plume yourſelf, by a ſuppoſed ſaving of 740,000l. (your Grace's erroneous calculation of the coſt), and ſupply their place by a chain of redoubts, for the ſecurity of our dock-yards, the defence of the channel, and the protection of our commerce!

The fatal American war, ſays your Grace, has enabled the navies of France and Spain to increaſe, ſo as greatly to out-number ours. Surely your Grace might likewiſe add,

add, the wiſe policy of France, in the reduction of her great and burdenſome military eſtabliſhment; her expending as little as poſſible on uſeleſs fortifications, and even ſuffering many of them to fall into ruins. But your Grace has refined on this œconomical and judicious policy of France, by attempting to perſuade your countrymen (no great compliment to their underſtandings), that true Ordnance œconomy conſiſts in laying out millions, to form extenſive lines without troops, to erect works without utility, and to increaſe our fleet without building a ſhip!

This fatal American war ſeems to have made ſuch an impreſſion on your Grace's imagination (perhaps by ſome ſlight aſſociation of ideas connected with it), that whether you ſpeak in the ſenate, write in the cloſet, or converſe in private, you never fail to introduce it. Without it, you would really be in the predicament of the young gentleman who could not dance when an old trunk was removed, which uſed to ſtand in a corner of his room. If your Grace could

be

be perſuaded to drop your compaſſes, lay down Montalembert, and take up Mr. Locke for half an hour, you might ſtill attain ſome little knowledge on this curious philoſophical ſubject.

Your Grace ſays, "The extent of our marine force is, and muſt be limited: we can build and man but a certain number of ſhips: our utmoſt exertions have never been able to exceed 10 ſail of the line." Here you ſeem to allow, that when we have equipped a hundred ſail of the line, we have done our utmoſt; yet if I miſtake not, your Grace was loud in your invectives againſt Lord Sandwich, for not equipping more: the motive for this conſiſtency between your former conduct and your preſent argument, is evident. Yet ſtill I am perſuaded, that if the million and a half, which is devoted to your projects, were properly expended in building and equipping our fleet, we might increaſe our naval force beyond your Grace's preſcribed limits. The intereſt of even a million amounts to 50,000*l.* and the neceſſary annual repairs (ſuppoſing

(ſuppoſing your whole plan executed) would amount at 3, or 3 and a half per cent. to 30 or 35,000*l.* more. That there are means to increaſe our naval force, ſeems to have been the opinion of an excellent officer, whoſe enlightened ideas I would venture (if in my humble ſituation I might preſume ſo far) to recommend to the Adminiſtration and Parliament of Great Britain. In p. 16 of his tract, he ſays, " Having abandoned continental connections, it became more than ever neceſſary to apply all our reſources to the fleet. The queſtion is by no means, whether it be equal or ſuperior to what it was at any other period? I aſk, why it is not ſuperior to the fleet of the Houſe of Bourbon? Does it ariſe from want of funds or men? Why do we not appropriate the ſums employed in levying numberleſs corps, to build ſhips, and raiſe twenty or thirty thouſand marines? Why are not the new levies converted into marines? With proper encouragement this may be done, and unleſs it is done, we ſink under the ſuperior force of the enemy. Land

forces

forces are nothing, marines are the only ſpecies of troops proper for this nation; they alone can defend and protect it effectually. During the peace, they garriſon all your ports in each quarter of the globe; in time of war, your fleet is inſtantly manned, and by employing many of them, fewer ſeamen are wanted in proportion. Beſides, a fleet having on board twelve or fifteen thouſand marines, is equal almoſt for any enterprize againſt the enemy's ſettlements, and keeps them in conſtant anxiety in every part of the world. By this means, the expence and delays attending the embarkation of a conſiderable body of land-forces, deſtined to attack the enemy, would be ſpared, and the ſucceſs become more certain. Every other method to prevent the final ruin of this country will be hurtful and ineffectual. A *powerful fleet*, and *thirty thouſand marines*; I repeat it, will ſave us from deſtruction, and nothing elſe."

After obſerving that the Author has ſaid, "That againſt armaments calculated only

for occaſional and deſultory aſſaults, works of a very limited extent are ſufficient," you allow that the propoſition might be true, could we be ſure that our enemies will not bring over mortars or heavy artillery, and that they will never catch us off our guard. But let me now aſk you, whether we are moſt likely, with the ſame number of troops, to be ſurpriſed or caught off our guard in the works that we already have, or in your prepoſterouſly extenſive lines of detached and unconnected forts; and if a much greater number of men be allowed for their defence, conſiderable inconveniencies muſt unavoidably ariſe from thence to other parts of the ſervice. You very injudiciouſly mention Minorca and Gibraltar, for they militate directly againſt your aſſertions, and corroborate the principles laid down by him. Every one knows that they were taken in conſequence of their having extenſive works and inſufficient garriſons: You ſay that we attacked Vigo, and beſieged Cadiz and Toulon; and why did we not remain long before them?—The

reaſon is plain; the moving force of the country came down and forced us to abandon them; but had it been diſpoſed of in garriſons, it could not have produced ſuch an effect: And as to what we did at Cherbourg, which was not in a ſtate of defence to reſiſt even trifling attacks, it did not materially affect the intereſts of France. Though our military eſtabliſhment is but inconſiderable in reſpect of theirs; yet they have no fortifications half ſo extenſive as your projected lines.

In ſpeaking of his obſervations on the bombardment and inveſtiture of dock-yards, you both miſunderſtand and miſrepreſent him; he has aſſerted, that neither the permanent works, nor incombuſtible materials in them, can be deſtroyed by a bombardment, or till an enemy actually gets poſſeſſion of them; and this is a propoſition to which every man of common ſenſe muſt give his aſſent:—Now the preſent works, if properly completed, are much better

calculated, even with a moderate force, for preventing an enemy from getting into the dock-yards, than your lines, when finiſhed, will be with a large body of troops. Yet I am told, that you have ſeriouſly talked of pulling down Goſport works, and diſpoſing of them with the lands round them, in order to raiſe money for the execution of your own projects.

As to "maſts, yards, hemp, pitch, ſails, cordage, and ſeaſoned timber, which you ſay form the neceſſary proviſion for our naval arſenals," it is well known that two of theſe articles, viz. maſts and timber for yards (which are indeed by far the moſt expenſive and difficult to be procured), are always floated; and that two more of them, viz. pitch and cordage, may likewiſe be ſunk and floated, without receiving any damage: Even ſails might alſo be ſunk without being materially injured; but they are ſo light, that they can be eaſily removed in a few hours, and ſo might hemp. But if bomb proofs were even made before-

hand to ſecure theſe two articles againſt what may never happen, they would not coſt a fiftieth part of the expence of erecting your intended lines. And what neceſſity is there for putting them in ſtore-houſes that are immediately expoſed to the enemy's fire? Were he actually in poſſeſſion of the Goſport ſide at this moment, he could not injure them with red-hot ſhot; for they are placed in ſtore-houſes which are covered by another row of buildings. His red-hot ſhot cannot get at them, till they have penetrated three brick walls, each of which is ſufficient to reſiſt it when fired from that diſtance. And as to the ſeaſoned timber in the yard, it is all diſtributed in ſmall lots; and the wet reſervoir will hold more than ten times the quantity. Shells we know very well will not ſet fire to timber; neither will red-hot ſhot, unleſs it lodges in it; for in paſſing through, it has no more effect than ordinary ſhot. And if the timber is in water, it is manifeſt that red-hot ſhot can have no tendency whatever to ſet fire to it. Beſides, if a fire ſhould even

break

break out in one or more places, how eaſy is it to extinguiſh it before it gets to any height? The Honourable Captain Cornwallis, by his ſpirit, activity, and judgment, when the dock-yard at Portſmouth was actually on fire, gave a ſpecimen of what a few men may do in a little time, in ſecuring its periſhable ſtores. Your obſervations on the effect which red-hot ſhot had on the floating batteries at Gibraltar, are not applicable to the preſent ſubject, and are altogether puerile and trifling. They were no more ſecured againſt its effects by being afloat, than if they had been actually aſhore. For their ſides were too thick for the ſhot to penetrate them, and their conflagration was owing to its lodging itſelf in their timbers, of which the ſeams and joints were filled with pitch. The moſt ignorant perſon in the garriſon could have informed you, that this actually was the caſe, and could have given you more accurate ideas on the ſubject, than you really ſeem to poſſeſs. Aſk Sir William Howe, aſk General Cleveland, what effect our red-ſhot had on the enemy's blockhouſes at Mud Iſland, at the

diſtance

diſtance only of five hundred yards? I dare ſay they will tell you, that they did as little miſchief in paſſing through them as ordinary ſhot. Your Grace's peculiar antipathy to blockhouſes may ariſe from a ſuppoſition that they are expoſed to too cloſe an attack from hand-grenades: as your cautious ſyſtem is founded on this ſingle, but prudent maxim, that neither our perſons, nor property, wood, tar, ſtones, bricks, or cordage, can be a moment ſafe, unleſs they are abſolutely out of the reach of theſe tremendous ſhot and ſhells. Experience proves that bombardments in general are but very harmleſs. If the Dey of Algiers, however, is not convinced of this, as well as others, he may poſſibly adopt your plans of defence, and the Spaniards will *then* have ſome chance of ſucceſs. As common report ſays, that a formidable attack is actually meditating againſt that place, you had better propoſe *them* in time. But as neither Portſmouth nor Plymouth is threatened with any danger at preſent, ſuſpend your operations till you ſhall have added experience to theory on this great national

national ſubject. By purſuing this active and ſpirited courſe of ſtudy, you will ſurpriſe all Europe, lay the King of Spain under an obligation, out-rival the Duke de Chartres, and gain the eſteem and admiration of your grateful countrymen.

The obſervations you have made reſpecting inland depots are wonderfully ingenious. You ſpeak of them as if the Author had intended them for the hills of Suſſex. Are there no inland depots without land carriage? Are not Chatham, Woolwich, Deptford, *&c.* inland depots, in compariſon of Portſmouth and Plymouth? And as our ſhipping cannot poſſibly, in caſe of an attack, remain at Portſmouth, even after your lines ſhall be finiſhed, what great difficulty will there be in their taking moſt of the ſails and hemp with them to theſe depots? No perſon but your Grace, who diſcriminates and combines ſo accurately, could have brought together, on this ſubject, ideas ſo heterogeneous, diſcordant, and unconnected. But there is no neceſſity even for this expedient.

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The idea of ſinking powder with the combuſtible ſtores of a dock-yard, is unqueſtionably new. Nobody will diſpute the diſcovery with you. It is worthy of the philoſophic Duke of Richmond, and may be very fitly, in point of excellence, compared to another project of his, viz. that of raiſing the Royal George by means of air balloons! His ideas on every ſubject are extenſive. And even on this it is manifeſt, that he has already gone greatly beyond Blanchard or Lunardi. Sure I am, however, that the Author of the Short Eſſay never once thought, ſpoke, or wrote of ſinking powder. It is well known that our powder magazines are always bomb proof, and never in our dock-yards.

But ſuppoſing even a partial deſtruction of the inflammable ſtores in a dock-yard to take place; does it therefore follow, that they could not be replaced in leſs than four or five years, as you aſſert, when it cannot be queſtioned that there are in ſtore-houſes and yards on the river Thames ten times the quantity that there has ever

ever been, both in Plymouth and Portſmouth, at any one time whatever?

If your Grace would only deign to conſult officers who have ſeen ſervice on which Bomb-proofs of logs have been found both uſeful and neceſſary, you could hardly entertain a doubt of their being capable, when placed againſt one another with a proper pitch, of throwing off effectually, not only thirteen-inch ſhells, but any ſhells whatever, and much better indeed than even caſemates of maſonry.

Even Store-houſes might be built on Portſea Iſland, out of the reach of ſhot and ſhells from every quarter, and a canal cut from them to the harbour at an infinitely leſs expence than what will attend the execution of your line on the Goſport ſide. This would confine our defences to that iſland alone, and ſave the monſtrous expence of the Goſport diviſion. Nothing, indeed, can more completely procure the bombardment of our dock-yards, than the permitting of your lines to be

executed. For their erection will greatly facilitate the conqueſt of this country, and invite our enemies to viſit us. And whilſt they are attacking them, they may, on your own principles (not thoſe of the Author of the Short Eſſay), take it into their heads to throw red-hot ſhot and ſhells into the dock-yards, which I will by and by ſhow that they may do at Portſmouth almoſt as effectually after your works in the Goſport diviſion ſhall be finiſhed, as at preſent.

Pray, Sir, whether is it eaſier to calculate to a day when a work of a moderate extent, properly garriſoned, muſt be taken, or extenſive lines of works, which can only have inadequate garriſons?

You ſay, that the price of lands purchaſed on account of your works, ought not to be included in your eſtimate.

The original report does not ſpecifically mention any ſuch excluſion. At any rate it is perfectly abſurd. You might as well ſay, (and poſſibly you may ſay ſo hereafter),

after), that you did not include the materials with which they are to be erected, as the lands on which they are to ſtand.

The very circumſtance that the work propoſed for Frater Lake will not have the benefit of inundations, clearly proves, that this point of the line is naturally weaker than the one at Stoke's-Bay-houſe, and conſequently requires a ſtronger work, as the Author of the Eſſay has obſerved. There is, beſides, another circumſtance, which ſhows the manifeſt abſurdity of erecting a weaker work there, or even one of an equal expence with that at Stoke's-Bay-houſe. It is this; the laſt is near redoubts and other works, and can receive protection from them; but the firſt being upwards of two miles diſtant from it, muſt reſt its defence totally on itſelf, without receiving the leaſt ſupport from any other work. The exterior line joining them too, croſſes the country a little way in front of Forton. We dare not advance without it to oppoſe the enemy, and make uſe of flanking fires from theſe two diſtant works

at the ſame time, without deſtroying more of our own troops than the aſſailants. And the enemy, without coming within it, may at a ſmall diſtance from the head of Forton Lake, bombard both the harbour and the dock-yard, if we even ſuppoſe that an invading army would be rediculous enough to waſte time in doing ſo. Every perſon of the leaſt ſenſe or military knowledge muſt allow, that, if an enemy once gets poſſeſſion of the ground near Rowner church (which he certainly can, even without a ſtruggle, if that point is not ſtrongly fortified), it will be impoſſible for us, even with a force almoſt equal to his own, to prevent him from forming a ſecure communication with it and the head of Forton Lake, which will enable him to embrace completely, and take in a few days, the work at Frater Lake, whilſt he is bombarding, if he chuſes, both the harbour and dock-yard. This once done, he forms a barrier immediately againſt the country, from Frater Lake to the head of the inundation at Rowner church. The work at the Bay-houſe and the other parts of the line then become

uſeleſs

uſeleſs to us, and muſt fall almoſt inſtantly into his hands. Without a very ſtrong work at that ſaliant angle, the inundation will be uſeleſs, and the line incapable of being defended, or anſwering its intended purpoſe.

In this accommodating political eſtimate however, you have allowed as much for the pentagonal work at Stoke's-Bay-houſe, as the Author of the Eſſay puts down for it. For the propoſed fort at Frater Lake, there is inſerted 40,000 *l.* leſs than he allows for it, and 25,000 *l.* 13 *s.* 11 *d.* leſs than for that near Stoke's-Bay-houſe and Gomer Pond, although the poſition is naturally much weaker, and conſequently requires a ſtronger work, as every intelligent officer who examines them with attention, muſt acknowledge. Hitherto, in fortifying any line, regard has always been paid by every able fortifier, to the making of its different parts equally ſtrong. But your Grace, fond of novelty, and unwilling to obſerve the rules followed by others, totally inverts this method, and places the

ſtrongeſt

ſtrongeſt and moſt expenſive works in the ſtrongeſt poſitions, and in the weakeſt, moſt ſaliant, and tendereſt part of the line, none at all; fancying, I ſuppoſe, that you will be able eaſily to perſuade the enemy to attack at the very ſpot, where the advantages both of nature and art are moſt combined. The work near Rowner church you leave out altogether. Certain it is, however, that when you gave in your report to the Houſe in 1783, you had no ſuch intention, nay not even a few months ago. To make this point as ſtrong as that at Gomer Pond, would require almoſt double the expence, as every perſon who views the ground with a military eye muſt allow. You make no mention of the work you lately propoſed to have erected on the left of that traced out near Stoke's-Bay-houſe, which cannot be raiſed but at a conſiderable expence. You take no notice of the ſmall work you intended to conſtruct on a knoll or riſing ground near the road, which croſſes the moraſs a little below Grange Farm. You ſpeak not at all of the large work, which you inſerted in your general plan,

plan, between thoſe propoſed for Frater Lake and the ground near Rowner church. You do not mention the large work on Brown Down, nor ſeveral other large ones advanced ſome miles farther out as far as Titchfield Haven; works, which, taken together, could not be executed for three millions of money. You likewiſe omit one of the principal works on the Maker line, with the expence of the communications that muſt neceſſarily be made acroſs the creeks that interſect the ſame. And if there be no work erected on the point of land, on which ſtands the King's brewery, the enemy may eaſily come upon it, in ſpite of thoſe on Mount Edgecombe and Tor Point, and bombard both the harbour and the dock-yard. All this ſhews an unaccountable degree of fallacy or deception. For what is the uſe of lines unleſs they are complete, and are in a condition to anſwer the purpoſes they are avowedly intended for? And are not works ſo diſtant and disjoined, liable to be attacked and embraced ſeparately, without being able

to

furniſh the leaſt aſſiſtance to one another? From thence it is manifeſt, that your Grace has either relinquiſhed your former plans, or that you have in reality had no fixed ones at all, but have gone to Parliament to aſk money for a mere chimera, and a thing of which you had no determinate ideas. For the only progreſs you have yet made with your plan, is to reduce it one half, and at the ſame time to increaſe the expence of it in your reports, from 400,000*l.* to 692,562*l.* Now will Colonel Dixon pledge himſelf to finiſh the work already traced out on Mount Edgecombe for double the ſum your Grace has allotted forit in your eſtimate? Four or 500,000*l.* I will readily allow to be a very looſe expreſſion; and its being ſo, is the very reaſon why it ought not to have been made. It only ſhews, that you went to Parliament to demand money for the execution of a project that you had not digeſted, and of which you had no fixed or preciſe ideas. It would have been full as decent and becoming in your Grace, however, to have gone properly informed to the Senate of this country, when you went

went to propoſe for approbation an expenſive ſcheme, and not to have proceeded on a mere preſumption of your own infallibility. Your own words prove, Sir, that even your preſent eſtimate, made out with the aſſiſtance of a committee of engineers, is only a rough calculation, and no more to be relied on than the looſe report of 1783. The obſervations you make reſpecting detailed plans and ſections, the clearing of ground, levels taken in all directions, foundations, and various ſorts of ſoil, go only to eſtabliſh the aſſertions of the Author of the Short Eſſay; and while they account, in ſome meaſure, for the new works round Common coſting more than quadruple the original eſtimate made for them, announce the great probability of your own works (curtailed as they now are, both in number and magnitude) requiring for their execution quadruple the eſtimate you now deliver to the Public. But let me aſk you, if the members of that committee were unanimous in their opinions of your meaſure, what majority you were able to procure, and whether you did or did not

preſide yourſelf? Why was not Colonel Debbeig, an Officer of great and deciſive talents, high both in rank and reputation in the corps, deſired to aſſiſt at it as well as Col. Roy, Col. Dixon, and Col. Moncrief? Why was not General Green called in, an officer both of knowledge and experience? Why was not Col. Archer, who has been ſo many years reſident at Portſmouth? whoſe original plan for its defence was preferred by the engineers who examined it, to that which has been adopted, and is ſtill executing. No partiality, no prejudice could ever have induced your Grace not to pay theſe gentlemen a compliment ſo juſtly due to their merit and profeſſional character. You were modeſtly apprehenſive, perhaps, of their laviſhing too much panegyric on your Grace's deſigns; and, through a baſhful ſenſibility, declined receiving the applauſe of men whoſe unbiaſſed praiſes might juſtly have rendered you vain. Such a ſingular exception muſt have ariſen from ſome ſuch generous motive; a motive which your Grace's friends never once ſuſpected, and your enemies will ſcarce believe.

There

There is likewiſe a ſpecious degree of fallacy in your aſſerting, that your original Report was not meant to include the expence of thoſe alterations you have ſince made, and are abſolutely the reſult of your plans. There was no occaſion for altering and enlarging Fort Monckton, after 23,000l. had been expended on it, had it not been for rendering it one of the principal points in your projected line for the Goſport diviſion. The ſum you mention ſtill as neceſſary for completing it, falls ſhort of what the Author of the Eſſay allows for it, only 7,593l.; which ſhews that he has gone on the beſt information and the moſt ſolid grounds: and I will venture to ſay, that a few years will prove beyond a doubt, that inſtead of exaggerating the actual expence, he is conſiderably under it.—The alterations at Cumberland Fort are likewiſe part of your Grace's plan; and ſo is alſo what you are pleaſed to call the rebuilding of South Sea Caſtle: but is it probable that you will pull it down, and erect a new work at ſome diſtance behind it for 6,700l.; when you went to Parliament in

1783 for 3,376l. for improving it in the courſe only of one year? What an abſurdity was it to expend money in improving a work, and afterwards propoſe to pull it down? But will any officer pledge himſelf to build a ſquare fort, of a hundred yards exterior ſide (as it is traced on the ground), for triple that ſum? No one who conſults his own reputation. Had you then acted with candour and fairneſs, you would have allowed every article of expence you mention, to be the reſult of your plans even in the reduced ſtate in which you now announce them, except the 27,790l. for completing General Conway's works, which, however, is not half ſufficient for completing them properly. It is a ſhame to finiſh off ſuch works in a ſlovenly and unmilitary manner, and in order to ſave money for ridiculous projects of your own, to make ſod or earthen tenailles in a ditch that is to be filled with ſalt water. Let Conway's works be properly finiſhed, and Fort Monckton and the Goſport works and lines a little improved, and there will be no occaſion for your prepoſterous lines. What do you mean

mean by calling works that have never been finiſhed, and are only in a progreſſive ſtate, old ones ?

With regard to the number of men neceſſary for the defence of ſuch extenſive lines of field fortifications, I have only to obſerve, that if the cuſtomary method of reckoning in ſuch caſes be adopted, double what he mentions will hardly be ſufficient. Their extent in the three diviſions, taking in Portſea Iſland and the Maker Line, exceeds ſeventeen miles. I ſhall, therefore, leave it to the general officers of this kingdom, who are the proper judges of the matter, to determine, whether lines of ſuch extent can be properly defended by a ſmaller number of troops than the Author mentions, againſt an enemy who attacks them with a powerful army by land, whilſt he is at the ſame time maſter at ſea;—a ſuppoſition that muſt always be made, before a ſerious invaſion can be even conceived to take place.—It is the buſineſs of engineers to direct the execution of works, and to judge of the beſt method of erecting them.

them. But the attack and defence of lines ſo very extenſive, fall under the grand combination of military operations in general, and therefore are proper objects for the determination of general officers, and men who have commanded armies. And with regard to the practicability or impracticability of landing in particular places, ſoundings, *&c. &c.* and co-operating attacks with ſhipping, experienced admirals, and naval officers, ſhould likewiſe be conſulted.

If money has already been voted for the wall near Haſlar Hoſpital, it certainly ought to be charged to your account, ſince it is part of your line of defence in the Goſport diviſion; and the raiſing of it five feet higher than was intended by the Navy Board, is entirely a project of your own.

How can you venture to aſſert, that you never intended to have any works to the Eaſtward of Plymouth; ſince it is, I believe, very well known to Col. Dixon, Lord Townſhend, and others, that you actually

tually propoſed two, one above the Powder Magazine near Keyham Point, and another on the ſide of the Lake?

Upon what grounds do you preſume to declare, that the late Maſter General approved of your plans, ſince it is pretty generally underſtood, that he certainly did not approve of your line for the Goſport diviſion, and that he totally diſapproved of your works to the Eaſtward of Plymouth, which you now affect to ſay you never intended?

You diſcover a wonderful degree of ingenuity, my Lord, in pointing out the ſimilitude between fixed works and floating veſſels. Your ideas ſeem to be conſtantly excentric: every military man of leſs genius than yourſelf, is ſatisfied, that the ſtrength of every work or line is merely relative, and depends entirely, *cæteris paribus*, on the number of troops appropriated for its defence.

Could any perſon of leſs diſcrimination than your Grace diſcover, that the mere enun-

ciation of a propoſition that is founded on experience, is a recommendation of treacherous conduct? A man of ſuch diſtinct ideas muſt be a complete maſter of conſtruction.

The Author of the Eſſay never entered on the Carte du Pais of the Weſt-India iſlands; he only ſaid, that they are too inconſiderable, both in point of extent and population, for carrying on ſucceſsfully, for any length of time, the management and chicanery of a defenſive war; a truth which cannot be denied.

Your Grace's ſentiments on the American war, the Author is perfectly acquainted with; but he reaſons as an officer, not as a politician, therefore leaves your Grace in complete and triumphant poſſeſſion of the argument. He cannot help obſerving however, that your Grace's diſcretion (which, in J. Falſtaff's opinion, is the better part of valour) ſeems loſt in your patriotic zeal, whenever you condeſcend to touch on the ſubject. Your Grace (for I am pedantic enough

enough to be fond of claſſical alluſions), brings ſtrongly to my recollection, the celebrated character of Drances, who was a perſon of diſtinguiſhed rank, fortune, and family, and who, from certain ſympathetic feelings, perhaps diſplayed as ſtrong a partiality to lines and fortifications as your Grace. In a debate in the Latian ſenate, on a war then depending (I ſpeak on Virgil's authority), this Drances is pointedly addreſſed by Turnus, a young, gallant ſoldier, whoſe conduct he had miſrepreſented, and whoſe reputation he had aſperſed with his uſual malignity.

Talibus exarſit dictis violentia Turni:
Dat gemitum, rumpitque has imo pectore voces:
'Larga, quidem, Drance, tibi ſemper copia fandi,
'Tunc cùm bella manus poſcunt; patribúſque vocatis
'Primus ades: ſed non replenda eſt curia verbis,
'Quæ tutò tibi magna volant; dum diſtinet hoſtem
'Agger murorum, nec inundant ſanguine foſſæ.—
'Nunquam animam talem dextrâ hâc (abſiſte moveri)
'Amittes: habitet tecum, et ſit pectore in iſto.'

As I know your Grace's juvenile ſtudies were rather directed to the abſtract ſciences than the *Belles Lettres*, I have taken the liberty to ſubjoin Dryden's tranſ-

lation, to make the original perfectly intelligible.

Theſe words ſo full of malice, mix'd with art,
Inflam'd with rage the youthful hero's heart.
Then groaning from the bottom of his breaſt,
Struggling for words, he thus his wrath expreſs'd:
You, Drances, never want a ſtream of words,
Thou, when the public need requires our ſwords.
Firſt in the council-hall to ſteer the ſtate,
And ever foremoſt in a tongue debate.
While our ſtrong walls ſecure us from the foe,
Ere yet with blood or ditches overflow.
Of my revenge: diſmiſs that vanity—
Thou, Drances, art below a death from me.

To complete the portrait, Drances is thus deſcribed by the Poet:

Tum Drances idem infenſus, quem gloria Turni
Obliquâ invidiâ ſtimulíſque agitabat amaris,
Largus opum, et linguâ melior, ſed frigida bello
Dextera—
Seditione potens (genus huic materna ſuperbum
Nobilitas dabat, incertum de patre ferebat)

Then Drances took the word, who grudged long ſince,
The riſing glories of the Daunian Prince;
Factious and rich, bold at the Council-board,
But cautious in the field, he ſhunn'd the ſword,
A cloſe caballer, and tongue-valiant Lord.
Noble his father was, and near the throne,
But what his mother's parentage; unknown.

He

I take this opportunity of returning your Grace my ſincere thanks for Aaron Monçeca's *bon mot* to Jacob Brito. Your Grace will readily perceive, that I thought myſelf bound, in point of honour, reciprocity, and politeneſs, to make ſome return for this favour, and ſtill more to enhance the compliment, I have given your Grace another occaſion to criticiſe my French.

Your Grace might ſurely have aſſigned ſome plauſible reaſon for not including the purchaſe of land in your probable eſtimate, without invidiouſly (I had almoſt ſaid maliciouſly) aiming a reflection at the proprietors, the evidence, or the juries. I ſhall quote your own words: "The value of lands, depending on what neighbours may be *got* to ſwear to, and on what juries may *chooſe* to give, could not be included in that calculation?" Here your Grace has compreſſed with unuſual energy of ſtyle, in a ſingle ſentence, three diſtinct charges againſt the proprietors, for working on their neighbours, to prove on oath the fictitious value of their lands. Secondly, a charge on the evidence, that they could be pre-

vailed on to do ſo; and thirdly, an injurious attack on juries, as if they were always ready to act without the leaſt regard to any principle of integrity or juſtice. I hope your Grace for the future will always contrive to get commiſſioners appointed to aſcertain the value of lands purchaſed for the Crown; and effectually prevent ſuch corrupt and flagitious practices, which ſeem to have diſcompoſed the ſerenity of your temper, and ſhocked your extreme delicacy.

You demand to know, "If St. Lucia and Savannah were not ſaved from the attacks of Count D'Eſtaign by fortifications?" I anſwer, No, but by field poſitions." The fort under General Grant was never attacked. "Did not Brimſtone-hill, you ſay, in the iſland of St. Chriſtopher's, with all its defects, want of preparation, without (Montalembert's) caſemates, and with but a ſmall garriſon, hold out for many weeks againſt the Marquis de Bouillé?" It held out not many, but ſome weeks; but it was taken in defiance of our fleet; and its fate very ſtrongly verified the truth of the Author's obſervations,

"That

" That in ſuch iſlands, troops, when once landed in force, muſt infallibly ſucceed, in ſpite of any marine whatever."

By what ſtrange perverſion of candour and common ſenſe do you infer, that the Author of the Eſſay cenſures either General Burgoyne or Lord Cornwallis? You ſeem diſpoſed to avail yourſelf of the reputation of others to cover your own defects. Diſappointments, when they are the unavoidable conſequences of the circumſtances in which Commanders are obliged to act, furniſh no foundation for cenſure. Their ſpirit, conduct, and gallantry could never be queſtioned. It is the misfortune of their country, that they were unſucceſsful.

Your obſervations reſpecting the intended cloſed work near Portſea Bridge, are altogether inconcluſive. For the diſtance between it and the new works round Common is ſo great, that, in caſe of an attack, they can furniſh no mutual protection to each other, or annoyance to the aſſailants in carrying on their approaches.

The

The caſemates at South Sea Caſtle will, till they are pulled down, be ſtanding monuments of your prodigality and ignorance of the very firſt principles of the profeſſion; every perſon knows that the direction of caſemates and embraſures does not always neceſſarily depend on that of the parapet. The abſurdity of their conſtruction was mentioned to you, whilſt they were erecting, and the mode of remedying it pointed out; there they are however, and every officer can judge for himſelf. You ſeem to reckon it a miraculous matter, that the concuſſion of the air, when guns were fired in them and with ſhot too (a circumſtance, which to be ſure muſt have made a wonderful difference in the experiment), did not ſhake them down, or diſplace bricks. Who would ever think of building caſemates for artillery, if guns could not be fired in them without ſhaking them down? Pray how many of theſe guns can bear on the buoy of the Spit? I poſitively deny that one half of them can fire towards this critical point, without recoiling againſt the ſides of the caſemates.

Your firſt query is this, " Can our navy at all times be ſure to prevent an enemy from landing in force?"

Anſ. Yes, certainly, if properly attended to and augmented; for an enemy cannot viſit us in force, without our previouſly having ſome notice of his intentions. The more diſtant then ſurely will ſuch an event be, the longer we maintain a ſuperiority at ſea.

Query 2d. " Can the preſent fortifications which are at Portſmouth and Plymouth (with the ſame garriſon and aſſiſtance that is ſuppoſed they may have), prevent an enemy landed in force and with heavy artillery, from bombarding the dock-yards."

Anſ. The preſent fortifications cannot; neither could your Grace's extenſive lines, if executed. But the number of troops neceſſary for manning them effectually, properly made uſe of in the field, might. Your aſſertion that the works you intend

to

to erect, will "prevent the enemy from getting, with artillery, nearer than three miles," is not true; for he may float ſea-mortars at Portcheſter Caſtle without annoyance, at the diſtance of only two miles from Portſmouth dock-yard; nay, he may even advance them half a mile nearer, under cover of his batteries aſhore. The line in front of Forton, joining your propoſed works at Stoke's Bay-houſe and Frater Lake, is likewiſe within two miles of the dock-yard.

Query 3d. "Can any other works, upon a contracted plan, prevent a bombardment?"

Anſ. No lines of works, that the military eſtabliſhment of this country could man, can prevent a bombardment.

Query 4th. "Can the effects of a bombardment and red-hot ſhot be prevented by the ridiculous means propoſed in the Short Eſſay?"

Anſ.

Anſ. Yes, ſufficiently to render its effects trifling.

Query 5th. "Can any other means be found to prevent a bombardment than by detached works at a diſtance, ſo as to keep an enemy out of reach of throwing ſhot and ſhells into the dock-yards with effect?"

Anſ. Certainly not, if there be no navy to prevent a landing, or to cut off his ſupplies. But your own works, though very extenſive, fall not under this deſcription; for they cannot prevent a bombardment.

Query 6th. "Can detached works be done cheaper; and is the object to be preſerved, worth the expence?"

Anſ. Yes, if we have a ſufficient number of troops to occupy and maintain the advanced poſitions. To recommend your own plans, which cannot prevent a bombardment when executed, you magnify beyond all bounds the terrors of it, and

conſequently the object. I think you had better conſult on this head the Dey of Algiers.

Query 7th. "Will the force requiſite to defend the dock-yards without works, be leſs than what may defend them with good fortifications?"

Anſ. No: But the force requiſite for defending your extenſive lines, properly applied in the field, would effectually protect the dock-yards. But ſhould even a greater be required, it would be preferable, becauſe it would be moveable and leſs expenſive.

Having now anſwered your Grace's Queries, on which you reſt all the arguments for your expenſive and no leſs extenſive lines, permit me to interrogate you in return.

1ſt, Whether it is better for us to have works of a moderate extent, which may be

manned; or prepoſterouſly extenſive lines, which we cannot man?

2d, Can the military eſtaliſhment of Great Britain ſpare from other neceſſary and indiſpenſible ſervices, a ſufficiency of troops for manning lines ſeventeen miles in extent?

3d, Should an enemy that can command a ſufficiency of troops almoſt for any military purpoſe, get poſſeſſion of theſe lines, may he not convert them, with little trouble, into impenetrable barriers and lines of circumvallation againſt the reſt of the country?

4th, Thus circumſtanced and ſuperior at ſea, may he not annihilate our trade, and reduce us to any terms he chooſes to dictate; or ſhould the conqueſt of the iſland likewiſe be his object, will he not be enabled, by his ſituation, to make every preparation with advantage for rendering the attempt ſucceſsful, and to ſeize the fitteſt times

for acting, which in war is almoſt every thing?

5th, Whether is the annihilation of our trade, with the ſubjugation of the iſland, or the throwing of a few red-hot ſhot and ſhells into a dock-yard, an event moſt to be guarded againſt?

6th, Will not the annual expence that muſt be incurred in keeping your works in repair, together with the intereſt of the capital after they ſhall be erected, build annually ſix or ſeven ſail of the line?

7th, Would not the command of Spithead, St. Helen's, the Iſle of Wight, and the intire navigation round it, be the immediate conſequence of ſuch an enemy's getting poſſeſſion of your projected line of defence for the Goſport diviſion?

If your Grace would conſider the Short Eſſay candidly and impartially, you would eaſily perceive that the Author admits a ſyſtem of defence, both as proper, expedient,

dient, and neceſſary; but he recommends one adapted to our inſular ſituation and military eſtabliſhment. Men who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves in every branch of the military profeſſion ſhould, and ought to be, conſulted. Naval Officers are undoubtedly the beſt judges of the practicability of landing on particular ſpots; they are the beſt judges of the nature of the coaſt; how near ſhips of the line, or frigates, can approach the ſhore, to cover and protect the landing of troops; and of the probable effects of a fire judiciouſly directed from batteries erected on ſhore, to oppoſe the enemy's ſhipping, and to annoy the troops on their approach. General Officers who have commanded in the field, who are acquainted by experience both with the attack and defence of lines, ſhould be conſulted on their ſituation and expediency; and determine, with ſome degree of accuracy and preciſion, on the number of troops abſolutely requiſite to maintain them; otherwiſe the ſtrength of our works will become relative weakneſs.

When

When a plan, combined, arranged, and methodized in all its parts, has once been fixed on, it ſhould be invariably and progreſſively purſued; and the uninterrupted execution ſubmitted to engineers, who are certainly the beſt qualified for conſtructing the works, though their opinion ſhould not be implicitly and excluſively adopted. No man, I am confident, who has a ſincere regard for the welfare and honour of his country, would ever wiſh to ſee a matter of this importance ſolely entruſted to the control and direction of a Maſter General, who, from party and politics, may be thrown into that ſituation, by a deſertion of his friends, and a dereliction of his principles. If this ſhould ever be the caſe, we might ſee ſuch a man, with mediocrity of parts, and half-educated talents, labouring to diſtinguiſh himſelf, by tampering in a ſcience he does not comprehend, and in which he has never been profeſſionally inſtructed, or even derived the leaſt knowledge from experience or ſervice.—We ſhould ſee ſuch a man puzzling himſelf,

and

and perplexing others; obtruding his *own* plan and ſyſtem of defence, founded on whim, caprice, and preſumption; and who, by indulging the native propenſity of a turbulent, yet trifling diſpoſition, may at laſt miſtake the reſtleſſneſs of folly for the activity of genius.

Your Grace has, however, given the Miniſter an opportunity of diſplaying another unequivocal and ſubſtantial proof of his regard to œconomy in the expenditure of public money. I do not preſume to reaſon as a politician or a financier; but if I may be allowed to judge from the Miniſter's ſentiments delivered in the Houſe of Commons (and ſurely I cannot have better authority), the revenues of this country will ſcarce bear the neceſſary and indiſpenſible charges of the eſtabliſhment. We have ſeen our navy diminiſhed, our army reduced; our militia is not to be called out; even our ſhipwrights are diſcharged; and all this is avowedly done, on the principle of rigid œconomy.

My

My real attachment to the Miniſter, my ſincere regard to his reputation, make me anxious for his conſiſtency. In my humble capacity, I would fain ſecond his views, by pointing out a great national object of œconomy to his conſideration. I am convinced of the rectitude of his deſigns, and ſincerely hope that his conduct will never furniſh a plauſible pretext to the malicious candour of party to praiſe his intentions, and then invidiouſly contraſt his actions with his profeſſions, by inſinuating that miniſterial œconomy is bartered for political ſupport, and bounded by political connections.

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